Muhammad Ali ON The Fourteen Words

This is fairly straightforward, below are two pages from *Muhammad Ali: His Life And Times*. I met or at least saw The Greatest when he visited London. The linked photo-graph was taken by me.

I've been an Ali fan since I saw him knock out Sonny Liston (as Cassius Clay) in 1964 – I was eight years old at the time. I can also just about remember his first fight with Henry Cooper (al-though I don't think I rooted for either of them). This entire book is now available free on-line from various websites, but the two pages here, which were scanned a few years ago, sum up Ali's position on race, mine, and that of every right thinking white man, including those who for all the usual reasons would not dare to enunciate it so clearly, if at all, ie, I don't hate the white man/black man, but I want my grandchildren to look like me. And my great-grandchildren. To the N^{th} generation. What is so terrible about that?

Ali mentions also *en passant* the Vietnam War. He took a lot of flak at the time for his principled stand against this unneces-sary conflict, but the passage of time demonstrated that he was right and we were wrong.

On integration and segregation: "Why ask me if I believe in segregation. I recognize the fact that you believe in it. What do you mean, you don't believe in it? Oh, man, you're just crazy. Every city I go to, I can find a black neighborhood and a white neighborhood. How many Negroes live out here in this big old neighborhood? I'd like to see peace on earth, and if integrating would bring it, I'd say let's integrate. But let's just not stand still where one man holds another in bondage and deprives him of freedom, justice, and equality, neither giving him freedom or letting him go to his own."[12]

On lack of black pride: "We've been brainwashed. Everything good is supposed to be white. We look at Jesus, and we see a white with blond hair and blue eyes. We look at all the angels; we see white with blond hair and blue eyes. Now, I'm sure there's a heaven in the sky and colored folks die and go to heaven. Where are the colored angels? They must be in the kitchen preparing milk and honey. We look at Miss America, we see white. We look at Miss World, we see white. We look at Miss Universe, we see white. Even Tarzan, the king of the jungle in black Africa, he's white. White Owl Cigars. White Swan soap, White Cloud tissue paper, White Rain hair rinse, White Tornado floor wax. All the good cowboys ride the white horses and wear white hats. Angel food cake is the white cake, but the devils food cake is chocolate. When are we going to wake up as a people and end the lie that white is better than black?"[13]

On intermarriage: "You say maybe in another five thousand years or so, all races are going to be the same color. You say we'll be the color of that dog over there, but I don't want to be that color, and I don't want my children to be that color. No intelligent black man or black woman in his or her right black mind wants white boys and white girls coming to their homes to marry their black sons and daughters to produce little pale half-white green-eyed blond-headed Negroes. And no intelligent white man or white woman in his or her right white mind wants black boys and black girls comin' around their homes to marry their white sons and daughters and in return introducing their grandchildren as little mixed-up kinky-headed half-black niggers. You want your child to look like you."[14]

On the need for a separate black homeland: "We were brought here four hundred years ago for a job. Why don't we get out and build our own nation and quit begging for jobs? We want a country. Why can't I have my own land? Why can't I build me a house? Why can't we be free? We've been down so long we can't even imagine having our own country. You know, we're forty million people. We're the wisest black people on the planet; we learn everything the white man knows. Black people from Africa come here, learn half of what we know, and they go home and run their own country. We'll never be free until we own our own land. We're forty million people, and we don't have two acres that's truly ours."[15]

On hate: "I don't hate nobody and I ain't lynched nobody. We Muslims don't hate the white man. It's like we don't hate a tiger; but we know that a tiger's nature is not compatible with people's nature since tigers love to eat people. So we don't want to live with tigers. It's the same with the white man. The white race attacks black people. They don't ask what's our religion, what's our belief? They just start whupping heads. They don't ask you, are you Catholic, are you a Baptist, are you a Black Muslim, are you a Martin Luther King follower, are you with Whitney Young? They just go whop, whop, whop! So we don't want to live with the white man; that's all."[16]

On money versus principle: "I could make millions if I led my people the wrong way, to something I know is wrong. So now I have to make a decision. Step into a billion dollars and denounce my people or step into poverty and teach them the truth. Damn the money. Damn the heavyweight championship. I will die before I sell out my people for the white man's money. The wealth of America and the friendship of all the people who support the war would be nothing if I'm not content internally and if I'm not in accord with the will of Almighty Allah."[17]

BELINDA ALI: "On the road, talking at colleges; we were together, just him and me, eating in snack shops, thinking about the future. It was wonderful, but every time Ali spoke, there'd be hecklers. He'd be in the middle of a speech, and someone would shout